Renegade Press PRESENTS

WORDSMITH

2.00 CANADA
1.70 IN U.S.

5 MAY

Comics Buyer's Guide Fan Awards for 1985

Vote for your favorite in each category:

1. **Favorite Editor** .....
2. **Favorite Writer** .....
3. **Favorite Artist** .....
4. **Favorite Cover Artist** .....
5. **Favorite Comic-Book Story** .....
6. **Favorite Comic Book** .....
7. **Favorite Limited Comic-Book Series or Graphic Novel** .....
8. **Favorite Book*** .....
9. **Favorite Character** .....
10. **Favorite Publication about Comics** .....

Phil Seuling Award for Favorite Direct-Sale-Only Title .....

**Favorite Book* does not include graphic novels but can include your favorite reprint comics collection, favorite book about comics, etc. — with a copyright date of 1985.*

Only material cover-dated 1985 is eligible for consideration. *Votes for ineligible material will not be counted.*

Anyone may copy and circulate this ballot, and any fan may vote only once and vote for no more than one nominee in each category. Ballot-box stuffing will result in the destruction of all ballots involved. You need not vote in all categories. ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** *is not eligible for Category 10.*

A free copy of ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** *for Aug. 1, 1986 (which will carry the results of voting) will be sent to any U.S. voter who does not already have a current or expired subscription to* ***CBG****. Votes from other countries will be counted, but we regret that a sample copy cannot be sent unless the vote is accompanied by $1.50 in U.S. funds to cover costs of handling and shipping to another country.*

Mail your ballot individually in a single envelope by June 30, 1986 to:

Comics Buyer's Guide *Fan Awards*
700 East State Street
Iola, Wisconsin 54990

Name ..... **Age** ..... **Male Female** *(circle one)*

Street or Box .....

City, State, and ZIP .....

Please type or print your vote and information clearly.

RENEGADE APPEARANCES

JULY 4-6 CHICAGO COMICCON

Michael Cherkas (The Silent Invasion)
Larry Hancock (The Silent Invasion)
Max Collins (Ms. Tree)
Terry Beatty (Ms. Tree)
Joe Judt (Strata)
Ray Murtaugh (Strata)
Jim Brozman (Strata)
Rick Hoberg (Eternity Smith)
Dennis Mallonee (Eternity Smith)
Dan Day (Cases of Sherlock Holmes)
Bob Burden (Flaming Carrot)
David Darrigo (Wordsmith)
Deni Loubert (Publisher)

JULY 25-27 ATLANTA FANTASY FAIR

Bob Burden (Flaming Carrot)
Rick Hoberg (Eternity Smith)
Dennis Mallonee (Eternity Smith)
Joe Sinardi (Maxwell Mouse Follies)

JULY 31 - AUG 3 SAN DIEGO COMICCON

Michael Cherkas (The Silent Invasion)
Larry Hancock (The Silent Invasion)
Joe Judt (Strata)
Ray Murtaugh (Strata)
Jim Brozman (Strata)
Max Collins (Ms. Tree)
Terry Beatty (Ms. Tree)
David Darrigo (Wordsmith)
Barb Rausch (Neil & Vicky)
Bob Burden (Flamming Carrot)
Dan Day (Cases of Sherlock Holmes)
Dennis Mallonee (Eternity Smith)
Rick Hoberg (Eternity Smith)
Deni Loubert (Publisher)

Please note that there will be a cocktail party at the Golden Apple Comic Shop, 7711 Melrose Ave. in Los Angeles on Tuesday August 5th. It will be hosted by The Golden Apple and Renegade Press as an informal get together for fans to talk to the artists and to see how a company like Renegade survives. Everyone from Renegade will be there (with the exception of R.G. Taylor from Wordsmith). It will run from 7-9 p.m., and probably spill over into the nearest bar, if I know Renegade. Everyone is welcome to come. Bring your friends, even if they don't read comics!!

WORDSMITH

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NO. 5 MAY 1986

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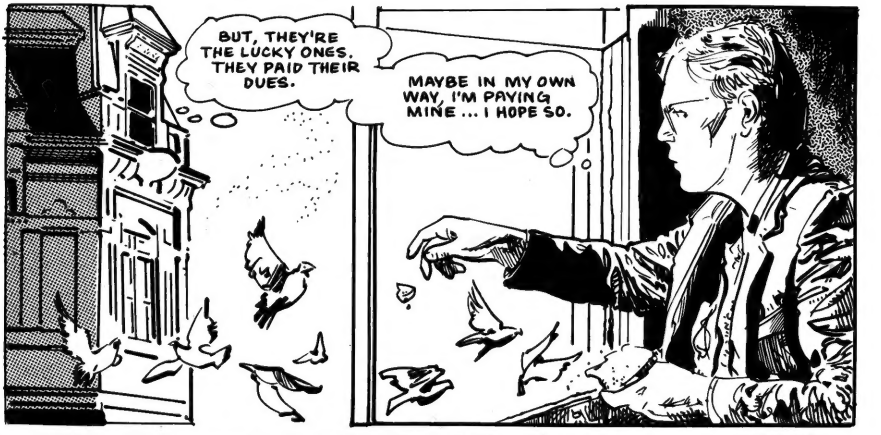
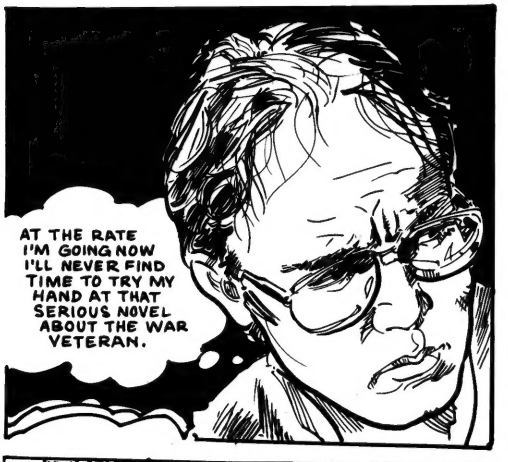
Renegade Logo Design by Dave Roman

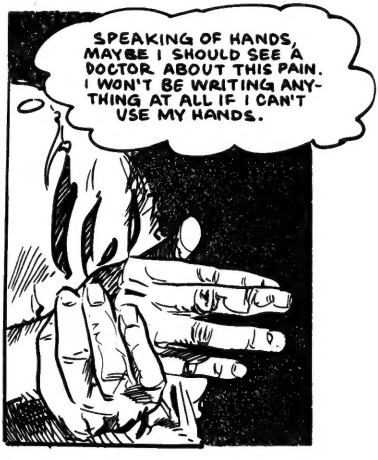
THEY'RE OUT THERE RIGHT NOW. WORKING ON THE NEXT BABBITT OR ARROWSMITH. THE NEXT GREAT GATSBY... GUYS LIKE FAULKNER, WOLFE AND HEMMINGWAY. DOS PASSOS AND DREISER... THEY'RE ALL OUT THERE.
... AND HERE I AM.

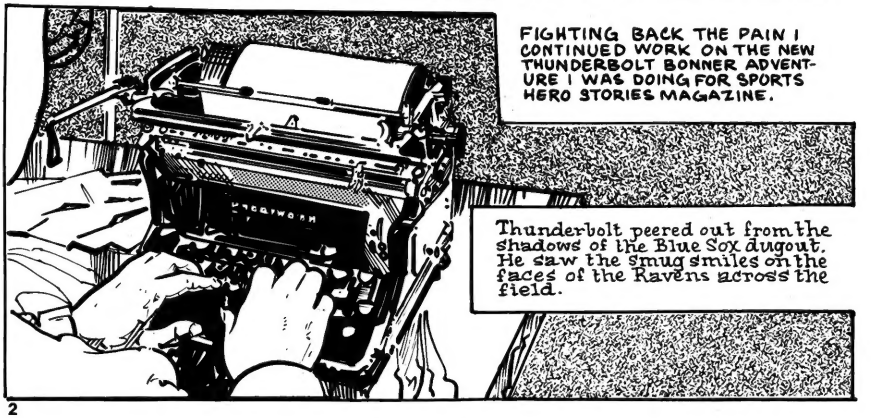
EVEN HEROES HAVE TO TAKE A JOKE

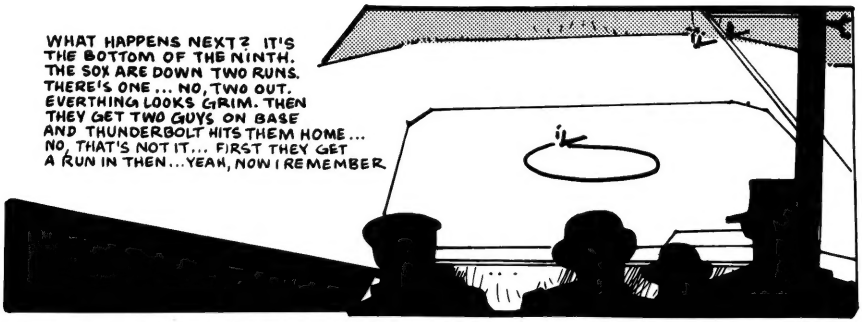
STORY : DAVID DARRIGO / VISUALS : R.G. TAYLOR
LETTERING : LES. TAYLOR

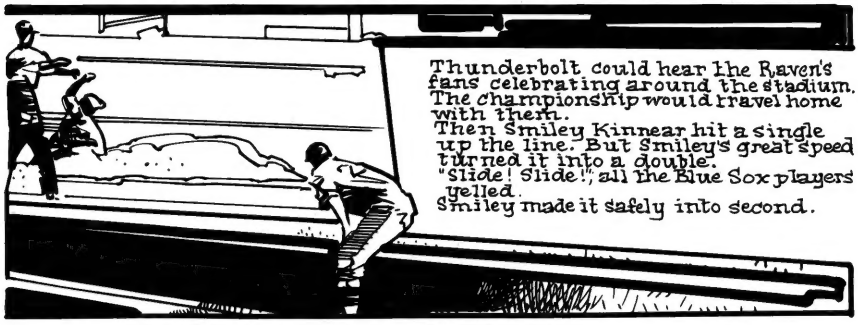

BUT, THEY'RE THE LUCKY ONES. THEY PAID THEIR DUES.
MAYBE IN MY OWN WAY, I'M PAYING MINE ... I HOPE SO.


AT THE RATE I'M GOING NOW I'LL NEVER FIND TIME TO TRY MY HAND AT THAT SERIOUS NOVEL ABOUT THE WAR VETERAN.

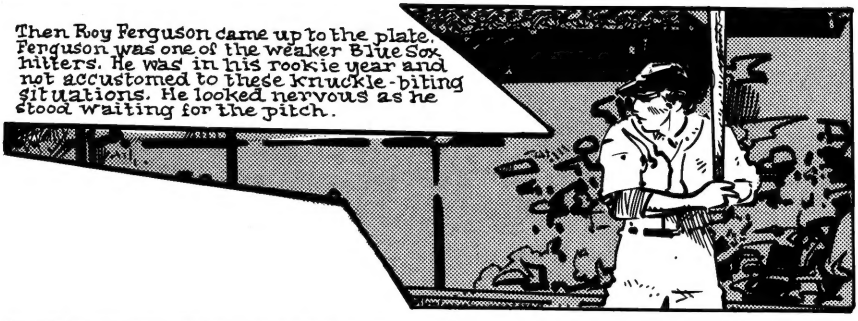

SPEAKING OF HANDS, MAYBE I SHOULD SEE A DOCTOR ABOUT THIS PAIN. I WON'T BE WRITING ANYTHING AT ALL IF I CAN'T USE MY HANDS.


FIGHTING BACK THE PAIN I CONTINUED WORK ON THE NEW THUNDERBOLT BONNER ADVENTURE I WAS DOING FOR SPORTS HERO STORIES MAGAZINE.
Thunderbolt peered out from the shadows of the Blue Sox dugout. He saw the smug smiles on the faces of the Ravens across the field.


WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? IT'S THE BOTTOM OF THE NINTH. THE SOX ARE DOWN TWO RUNS. THERE'S ONE... NO, TWO OUT. EVERTHING LOOKS GRIM. THEN THEY GET TWO GUYS ON BASE AND THUNDERBOLT HITS THEM HOME... NO, THAT'S NOT IT... FIRST THEY GET A RUN IN THEN... YEAH, NOW I REMEMBER



Thunderbolt could hear the Raven's fans celebrating around the stadium. The championship would travel home with them.
Then Smiley Kinnear hit a single up the line. But Smiley's great speed turned it into a double.
"Slide! Slide!", all the Blue Sox players yelled.
Smiley made it safely into second.



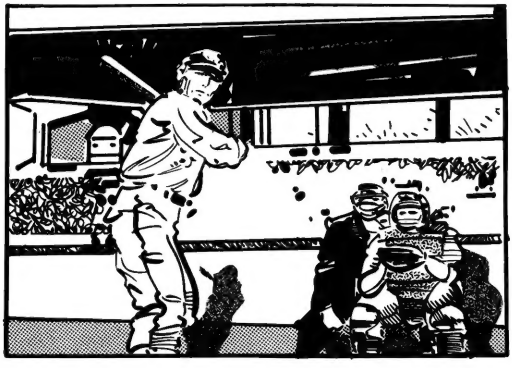
Then Roy Ferguson came up to the plate. Ferguson was one of the weaker Blue Sox hitters. He was in his rookie year and not accustomed to these knuckle-biting situations. He looked nervous as he stood waiting for the pitch.

Gunpowder Doyle, the veteran Raven pitcher, smiled. He knew he could eat a rookie like Ferguson for breakfast. Doyle went into his stretch and fired his famous 'cannonball'.
But the rookie hit it! The ball shot up into centerfield and Smiley Kinnear sprinted across home plate to tie the game.
The Blue Sox fans jumped for joy.

"Thunderbolt! Thunderbolt!," the Blue Sox fans shouted.

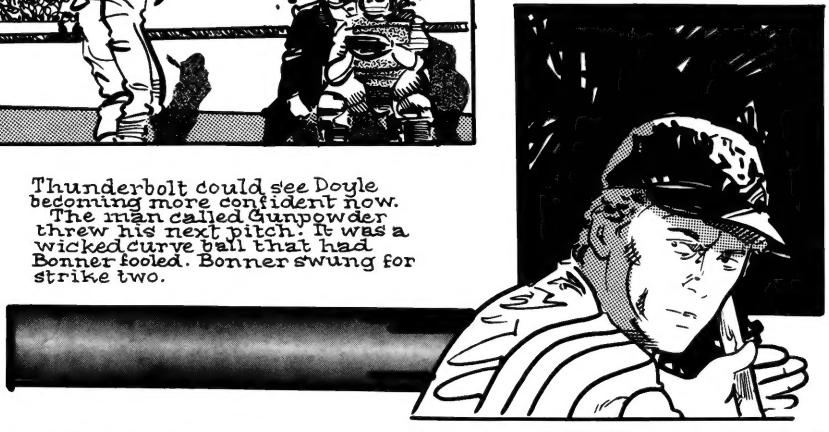
Bonner's tall, lanky figure stepped out into the bright sunshine.

The game rested in his hands. The championship of the world was at stake. Bonner hadn't hit a home run in over ten games. Could he do it now?



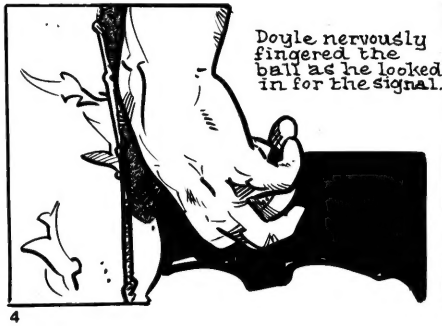
Ball one! Ball two!

Thunderbolt thought they might be trying an intentional walk, but he saw that Doyle was disgusted with his first two pitches. Then Doyle fired his third pitch. It caught the corner for strike one!

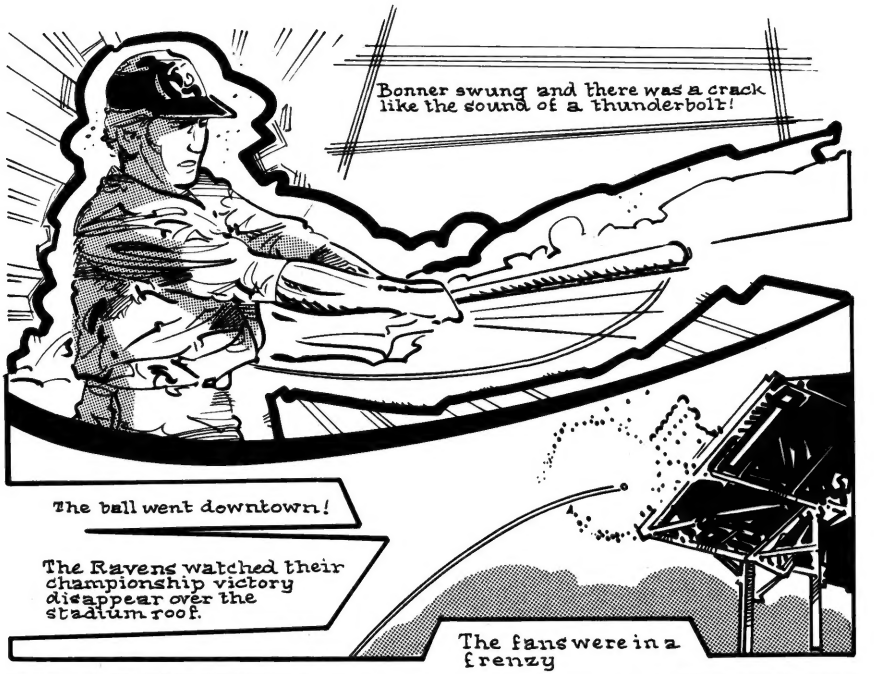


Thunderbolt could see Doyle becoming more confident now.

The man called Gunpowder threw his next pitch. It was a wicked curve ball that had Bonner fooled. Bonner swung for strike two.



Doyle nervously fingered the ball as he looked in for the signal.


Bonner swung and there was a crack like the sound of a thunderbolt!
The ball went downtown!
The Ravens watched their championship victory disappear over the stadium roof.
The fans were in a frenzy

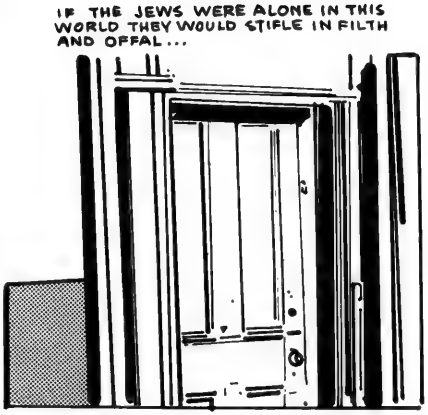
The Blue Sox were world champs! Thunderbolt Bonner was the man of the hour. His mighty bat had spoken and he'd come through in the crunch for his team

I FINISHED THE STORY LATE THAT AFTERNOON AND WENT OUT TO MAIL IT OFF.
THERE SHE GOES. 'THUNDERBOLT'S BIG HOMER' BY ED POST.
WHO'RE THOSE GUYS? OH. 'WORK PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION.'
Café
WPA
YOU CAN BET THEY'RE NOT GOING IN THERE FOR A MEAL.
BAR
FIRST WE REPEAL PROHIBITION.
THEN WE GIVE THEM JOBS.
SO THAT THEY CAN SPEND THEIR MONEY BOOZING.

IT WAS A NICE DAY. I DECIDED TO WALK OVER TO SEE ASA COHEN. ASA WAS THE OLDER BROTHER OF MY POET FRIEND, MOSES.
CLAY, YOU HANDSOME DEVIL. COME ON IN AND HAVE A BEER.
EITHER YOU'VE HAD ONE BEER TOO MANY OR YOU'VE GOT SOME PROFITABLE WORK.
ACTUALLY IT'S BOTH.
WHAT'S THAT SAY? ADOLF HITLER?
YEAH. YOU KNOW HIM. HE'S THE GUY WHO'S DOING THE BAD CHARLIE CHAPLIN IMITATION.
I WAS ASKED TO TRANSLATE PARTS OF A HUGE TRACT THAT HITLER WROTE IN 1924. IT'S CALLED MEIN KAMPF.

WELL, WHO HIRED YOU?
I DON'T KNOW HIS NAME. I THINK HE WORKS FOR SOME JEWISH POLITICAL LEAGUE THAT'S FIGHTING NAZI PROPAGANDA.
HE CAN STAY A SECRET FOR ALL I CARE. I'M GETTING GOOD SHEKELS FOR THIS!
LISTEN, BUDDY. I KNOW WE'VE TALKED ABOUT THOSE FASCIST GOOSE-STEPPERS BEFORE, BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL I STARTED DOING THIS WORK THAT...
...I'VE COME TO REALIZE HOW INCREDIBLY EVIL THEY ARE. BUT DON'T TAKE MY WORD FOR IT. READ HITLER'S OWN WORDS.
I TOOK THE CHAPTER HOME WITH ME TO READ OVER.

...THEY WILL TRY TO GET AHEAD OF ONE ANOTHER IN HATE-FILLED STRUGGLE AND EXTERMINATE ONE ANOTHER.



A RACIALLY PURE PEOPLE, WHICH IS CONSCIOUS OF ITS BLOOD, CAN NEVER BE ENSLAVED BY THE JEW.

CULTURALLY THE JEW CONTAMINATES ART AND LITERATURE AND DRAGS MEN DOWN...

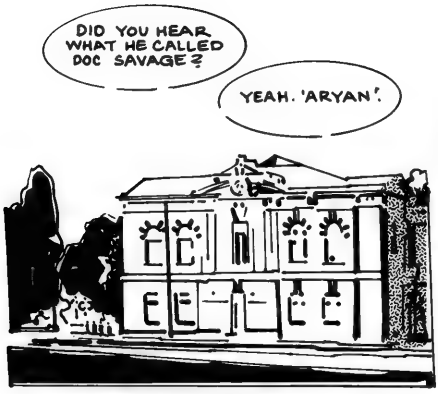
... INTO THE SPHERE OF HIS OWN BASE NATURE

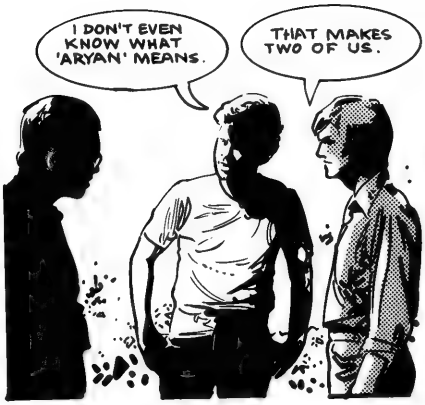
WE HAD INFORMAL MEETINGS OVER AT THE WRITER'S CLUB ONCE-A-WEEK. IT WAS TIME FOR MY ONCE-A-MONTH APPEARANCE.
ALL WE EVER TALK ABOUT ARE WRITING, THE ECONOMY OR SPORTS. SOMETIMES I'D LIKE TO ASK THEM WHERE THEY THINK THIS CRAZY WORLD IS GOING.
THERE'S BILLY AND KEN... OH, VINCE GALLO SHOWED UP, TOO.
BUT YOU COULDN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE, KEN.
RIGHT. YOU'D HAVE TO MOVE OUT THERE TO BE NEAR THE STUDIOS.
WELL, I COULD HANDLE THAT.
THOSE STUDIOS CAN EAT YOU UP AND SPIT YOU OUT PRETTY QUICK... RIGHT, CLAY?
I SURVIVED THIS BUSINESS. I CAN SURVIVE THAT ONE, TOO... HELLO, CLAY.
HI, CLAY... KEN IS TALKING ABOUT HOW HE'S CAUGHT THE 'HOLLYWOOD VIRUS!

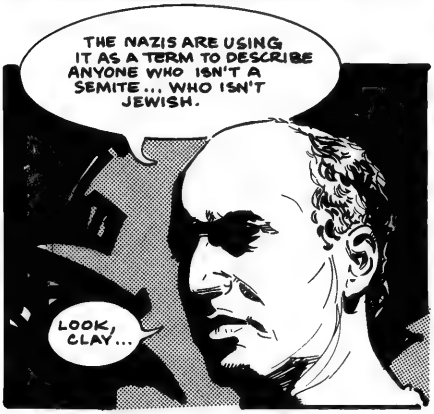
AFTERNOON, BOYS. PUFF. PUFF.
HI, SAM.
WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
I WANTED TO INTRODUCE ERIC HASSEL TO YOU. HE'S VISITING FROM GERMANY.
DO YOU WRITE, ERIC?
YA. I VASS BORN HERE IN AMERICA, AND I HAFF VANTED TO WRITE FOR THE STORY MAGAZINES SINCE I VASS A BOY.
ERIC WILL BE SENDING US HIS STORIES BY MAIL FROM GERMANY.
I WONDER IF HE'S A NAZI? IS THERE SOMETHING IN THEIR EYES THAT GIVES THEM AWAY?
HOW ARE THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN GERMANY NOW, ERIC?
VE HAFF A PERFECT NATIONAL SOCIALIST SOCIETY.
PERFECT?

YA. OUR LEADER, ADOLF HITLER, HAS MADE OUR COUNTRY STRONG AGAIN. HE ISS A GREAT HERO TO US.
HAVE YOU READ MEIN KAMPF?
OF COURSE
I THINK HITLER'S A CRACKPOT. HOW CAN YOU CALL A CRACKPOT A HERO?
TAKE IT EASY, CLAY.
NO, I HAVE A FEW JEWISH FRIENDS AND THEY'VE TOLD ME ALL ABOUT THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS IN GERMANY RIGHT NOW. I CAN'T TURN A BLIND EYE TO THESE NAZI BARBARIANS.
YES, I AM A NATIONAL SOCIALIST. AND I AM PROUD AND HONORED - TO BE A MEMBER OF THE PARTY.
PARTY? YOU'RE NOT A PARTY! YOU'RE A GANG! A GANG OF CRIMINALS!
IN THE PAST I WOULD HAVE CHALLENGED YOU TO A DUEL...

BUT SINCE I AM A CIVILIZED MAN - NOT A BARBARIAN - I VILL CALL YOU A DECADENT, JEW-LOVER TO YOUR FACE.
TAKE YOUR DIRTY HANDS OFF ME, NAZI.
HEY, YOU GUYS! STOP IT!
KNOCK IT OFF!
I CAN'T FIGURE YOU, NAZI. WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO WRITE PULP STORIES?
BECAUSE THEY CELEBRATE THE IDEAL MAN... THE SUPER MAN! ONE DAY I VILL CREATE AN ARYAN HERO THAT WILL EQUAL 'DOC. SAVAGE.'
YOU'RE CRAZY.'

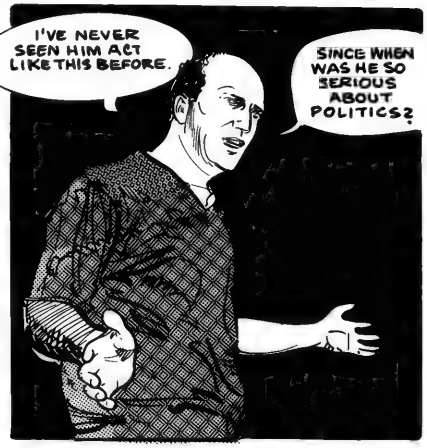

DID YOU HEAR WHAT HE CALLED DOC SAVAGE?
YEAH. 'ARYAN'.


I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT 'ARYAN' MEANS.
THAT MAKES TWO OF US.


THE NAZIS ARE USING IT AS A TERM TO DESCRIBE ANYONE WHO ISN'T A SEMITE... WHO ISN'T JEWISH.
LOOK, CLAY...

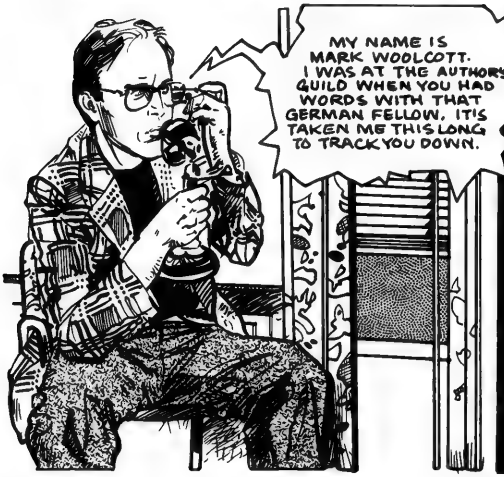
DON'T YOU THINK YOU WERE KIND OF RUDE IN THERE? THE MAN HAS A RIGHT TO HIS POLITICS.

OPEN YOUR EYES, WILL YA! BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.


I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM ACT LIKE THIS BEFORE.
SINCE WHEN WAS HE SO SERIOUS ABOUT POLITICS?

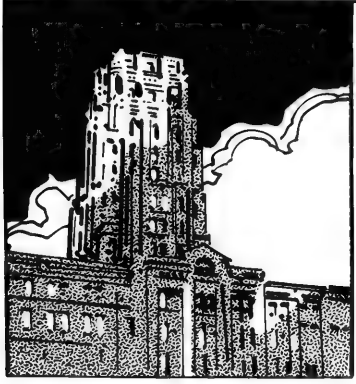
TIME PASSED IN SILENT OSTRACISM FOR ME. BUT I DIDN'T CARE.

I WAS STARTLED WHEN THE PHONE RANG ONE AFTERNOON SEVERAL DAYS AFTER THE INCIDENT AT THE CLUB.


MY NAME IS MARK WOOLCOTT. I WAS AT THE AUTHOR'S GUILD WHEN YOU HAD WORDS WITH THAT GERMAN FELLOW. IT'S TAKEN ME THIS LONG TO TRACK YOU DOWN.

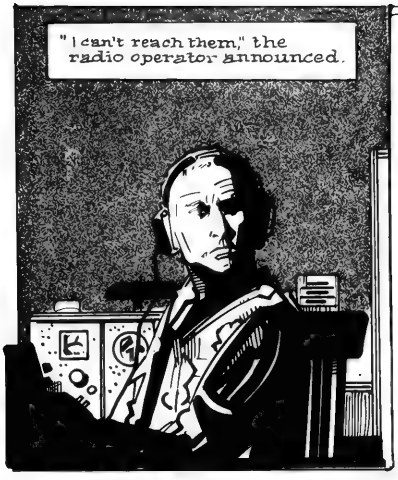
I WORK FOR A PUBLISHER WHO IS INTERESTED IN STARTING A PULP MAGAZINE THAT WOULD BE, SHALL WE SAY, 'POLITICALLY DARING' IN FORMAT.

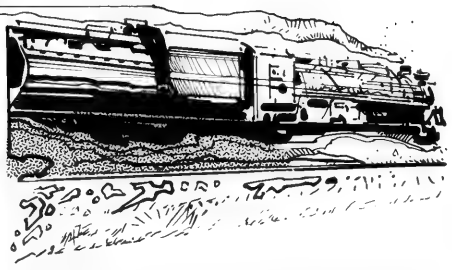
AN EXOTIC PERFUME CALLED 'CURIOSITY' PULLED ME TO HIS OFFICE THE NEXT DAY.



AFTER I SAW YOU WRESTLE WITH THAT NAZI I TOLD MY PUBLISHER THAT YOU'D BE THE IDEAL MAN FOR OUR MAGAZINE.
WE WANT TO HAVE A CHARACTER LIKE OPERATOR #5. HE'LL BE A U.S. SECRET SERVICE AGENT WHO FIGHTS AGAINST FASCISM. WE'RE CALLING HIM 'THE FREEDOM FIGHTER'.
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO HAVE THE HERO OPENLY FIGHT THE FASCISTS? WOULDN'T THAT BE...
UH, WELL, CONTROVERSIAL?
MY PUBLISHER IS NOT AFRAID.
I GRANT YOU THAT WE ARE GOING OUT ON A LIMB. BUT MY PUBLISHER REALLY FEELS THAT THE FASCISTS ARE A THREAT.
A THREAT THAT CAN'T BE IGNORED MUCH LONGER.
I AGREE.

BACK HOME I CALLED VINCE.
HE SAYS HIS PUBLISHER'S NAME IS P. RANK.
YEAH. I HEARD THAT RANK IS GETTING INTO PROPAGANDA FICTION. SO, HE PICKED YOU, HUH ?
THE PREMISE OF THE IDEA HAD OUR HERO FIGHTING A FASCIST GROUP CALLED 'THE NEW ORDER'
I SET THE SHORT, SAMPLE NOVELETTE IN THE ROCKIES.
THE SECRET SERVICE HAS TRACED AN ASSASSINATION THREAT ON THE PRESIDENT TO A LONELY TRAIN STATION.
OUR HEROINE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THE PLANS OF THE FASCISTS.
SHE ARRIVES EXHAUSTED AT THE STATION'S TELEGRAPH OFFICE. FREEDOM FIGHTER AND HIS MEN LISTEN TO HER REVEAL THE PLANS OF THE VILLAINS.



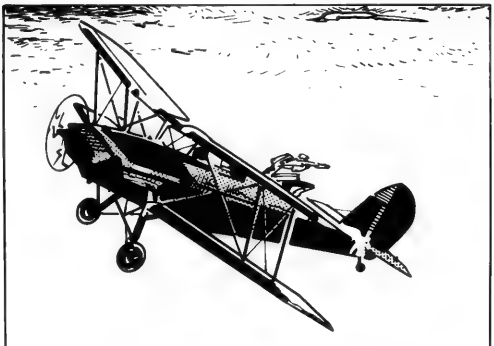


"The President is on that train," Special Agent O'Connor said. "You've got to reach them. The New Order plans to dynamite a whole trestle bridge when the train crosses over it."

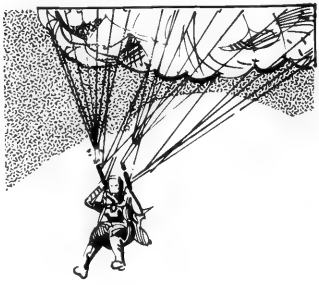
"It's no use," the operator said. "The signal can't get through the mountains. Too much interferende."

But the Secret Service man should have kown that wouldn't stop the Freedom Fighter. The Fighter picked up a phone and called a nearby airport.

"Ready?" the Fighter asked the pilot of the rescue plane.
"Yep," he replied. "We're lucky. We've got a tail-wind."



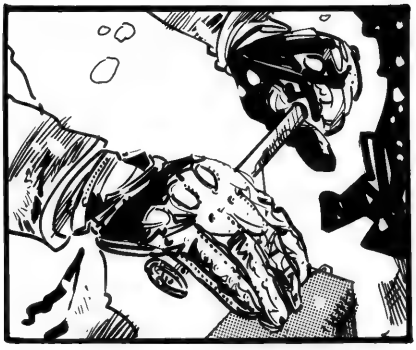
"Geronimo!" the Fighter yelled as he jumped out of his seat.



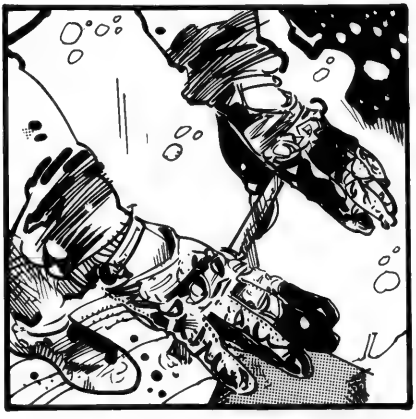
The Fighter dropped through the twilight sky. He knew it would only be twenty minutes before the President's train came through the mountain pass.

He broke away from his parachute harness...
...unaware that the big grizzly was watching behind him.
He couldn't shoot it. The noise would give him away to his enemies.
He thought fast... and brought out a signal flare.
The frightened creature ran off into the forest.
The Freedom Fighter heard the train horn echoing in the distance. He quickened his pace through the thick snow. The bear had cost him valuable time. Would he be too late?

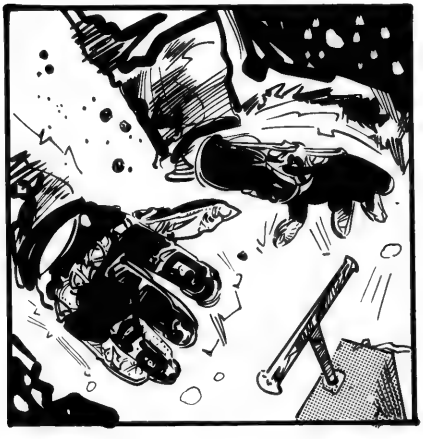
The New Order man had been posted up in a tree.
He too had heard the train horn in the distance. He watched the locomotive approach its doom.
The glint from the fascist's binoculars in the waning sunlight gave his position away.
The Freedom Fighter saw the reflection from the glasses and lunged ahead through the snow. He was ill-equipped to handle this mountain terrain. His legs could hardly move through the deep snow.
Somehow, with tremendous stamina, he finally came near the outpost in the tree. He figured he was barely within effective shooting range. But time had run out. He had to take aim. The countdown was on!

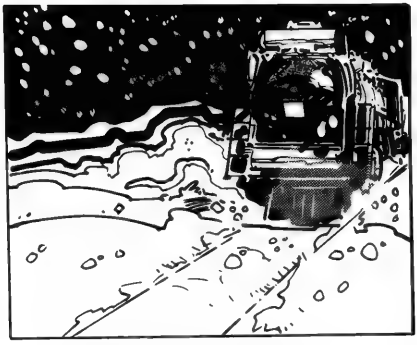


10... 9... 8... 7... 6...

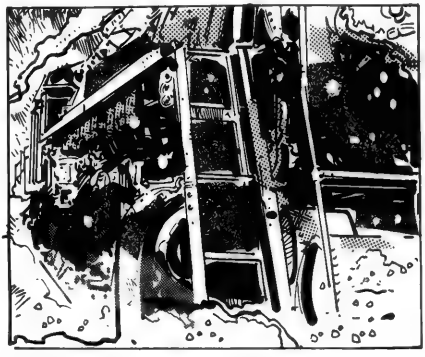


5... 4... 3... 2... BANG!

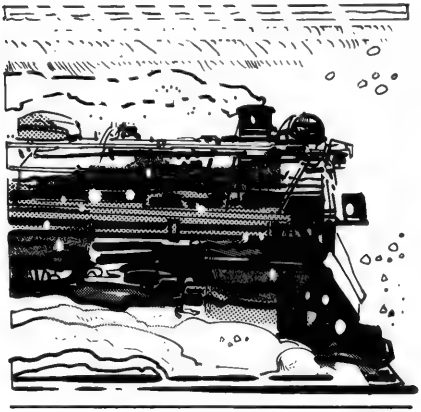




The lookout watched as the train started over the bridge. He waited until the President's car was midway across.



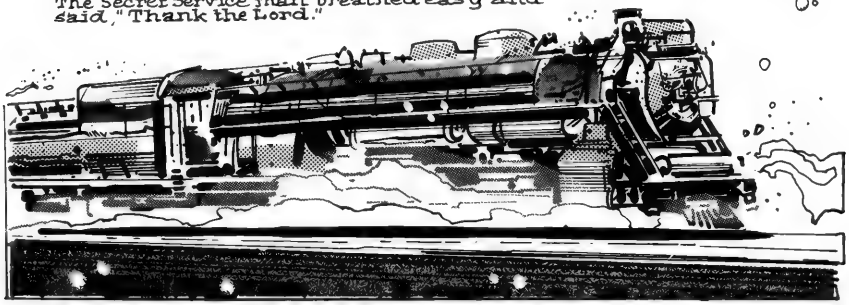
The train sounded its horn again as it safely continued its journey.



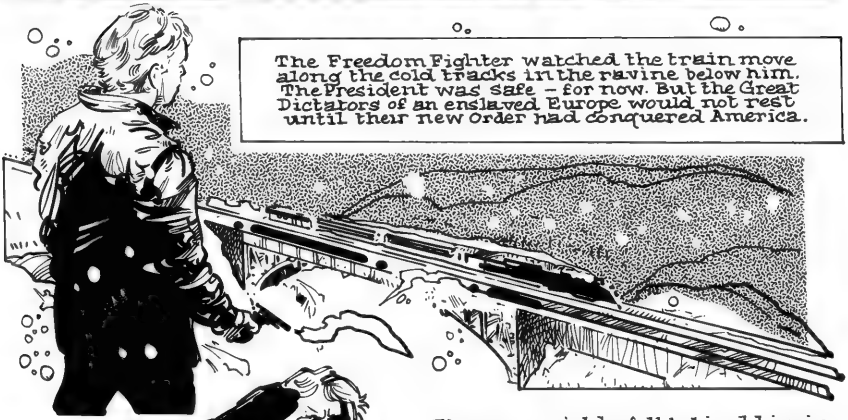
Back at the train station the radio operator exclaimed "Hey! I'm getting through to them now."

The operator twisted his dials feverishly for a minute and waited for the reply. Then he turned to Agent O'Connor and said, "It's too late. The train has already crossed the bridge. But, nothing happened"

The Secret Service man breathed easy and said, "Thank the Lord."



The Freedom Fighter watched the train move along the cold tracks in the ravine below him. The President was safe – for now. But the Great Dictators of an enslaved Europe would not rest until their new order had conquered America.



The sun quickly fell behind him in the West. America would sleep easy tonight. The Freedom Fighter looked at the President's car and raised his arm in salute.

I'D WRITTEN THIS STORY TO THE EXACT SPECIFICATIONS I WAS GIVEN. BUT SOMETHING NAGGED AT ME AS I WENT TO DELIVER IT TO WOOLCOTT.
DAVID HARDWICK
AFTERNOON, CLAY.
WELL, THIS LOOKS LIKE JUST THE KIND OF STORY WE WANT.
WHILE YOU'VE BEEN WORKING ON THIS STORY I SHOWED OUR PUBLISHER OTHER EXAMPLES OF YOUR WORK. HE ENJOYED THEM IMMENSELY - ESPECIALLY YOUR CONGO CARSON STORIES.
THANKS.
YES, HE WANTS TO HIRE YOU TO BE THE PERMANENT STAFF WRITER FOR THE FREEDOM FIGHTER.
HE'D LIKE TO MEET YOU. GO RIGHT INTO HIS OFFICE.

COME IN MR. WASHBURN. NICE WEATHER WE'VE BEEN HAVING LATELY, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
YES, SIR.
THERE'S SOMETHING SCREWY ABOUT THIS OPERATION.
PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, CLAY. I'M P. FRANK ESQUIRE, AT YOUR SERVICE.
OH, NO!
YOU REALLY SWALLOWED ALL OF THIS. WE HAD YOU HOOK, LINE AND SINKER.
COME ON OUT, GUYS.
LOOK AT HIM. HE'S AS WHITE AS A SHEET.
OH, NO.

HA, HA. WE REALLY PULLED THE WOOL-COTT OVER YOUR EYES THIS TIME.
HA, HA, HA.
OH, NO.
WE GOT YOU GOOD, CLAY. HA, HA, HA.
COME ON, CLAY. DON'T YOU HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOUR?
SURE, WE'VE ALL GOT PROBLEMS, BUT WE'VE GOTTA LAUGH TOO. YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO LISTEN TO THE NEWS ON THE RADIO ALL DAY, WOULD YOU?
.... TOO MANY INVINCIBLE HEROES. WELL, YOU CAN'T TELL ME THAT SOMETIMES EVEN HEROES HAVE TO TAKE A JOKE.
YOU CAN'T CARRY THE WORLD ON YOUR SHOULDERS.
P.RANK! HA, HA, HA...
I THINK YOUV'E BEEN WRITING TOO MANY STORIES....

LOGO BY RON HOBBS

PULP FEVER

Send Letters to: PULP FEVER, c/o Dragon Lady Comic Shop, 200 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ontario M5V 1Z2

Dear David,

Pulp fever; I've had it since age 10 when I discovered my first blood and thunder **Doc Savage** novel. Many were to follow the Bronze Knight of the Runningboard and all have left indelible impressions on my soul. Yes, 'tis a strange and wonderful malady whose cure I hope never to encounter.

And to the fever, your creation adds fire yet. The Wordsmith is a classic in its own right. Rather then imitate the style of a bygone era, it re-creates the world of the thirties with all its grim realities intact. It presents us with a man of dreams in a world of nightmares, and makes us care about his problems.

The story works on many levels. The art is good, and black and white works perfectly with the mood you are capturing so well. Its biggest virtue, though, is that it is human in a medium that is all too super-human these days.

The Wordsmith is something special. It opens a whole new world. As a hopeful writer it spoke to me. Thanks.

Curt Ladnier, Bessemer, Alabama

Dear Wordsmithmen:

Insofar as writing letters of praise to comics is concerned, in forty-seven years my sins of sycophancy have been minor: a note to DC's **Real Fact Comics** in 1947; a letter to Julie Schwartz in 1944 slavering over Hawkman and advising him I wanted to be a great writer (his reply was my first encouragement, the basis for a friendship now nearly half a century old); a letter to **Detective Comics** in 1968 and a rave notice for Len and Berni on the original **Swamp Thing**; and some words of enthusiasm to the guys who were doing **Nexus** for Captial in 1983. Perhaps a few more, memories of which are now lost in the mists of time and the toils of everyday existence. Not that many, all told.

But, as you have no doubt been advised by publisher Loubert, my interest in Wordsmith has been constant since before your first issue hit the stands. Apart from the intrinsic merits of the book, my engagement with your work is no nobler than a sense of enlightened self-interest. I've been a writer all my life, even worked in the pulps during those last dear days of the mid-Fifties when, to my horror, I found the pulps had become pocket-sized survivors of a once-robust industry, things done on hard-finish paper; and if I had a dime for every time I've said in print or in public that writing well is a holy chore, I'd have at least a few bucks. So any comic about a writer is one I look at carefully and with affection.

You deserve the affection, because the care you take with your craft is evident. And if I have carps and kvetches, they are the kind brothers visit on each other. But that responsibility to comment is only part of it. The loving strokes have to be given, as well. And that is what I do here

"File It Under 'P' " in your third issue deserves uncommon praise. I'm not sure that anyone who hasn't had to take an ethical stand in defense of something he or she has created, can possibly know on a visceral level how deeply runs the moral imperative in that story.

In an industry devoted to diversion, the moral imperatives can barely be detected beneath the clamor raised by superhero fistfights and the clank of robots out to dominate the universe. Illustrated stories that deal with the important issues not only of **Our** Times, but of **All** Times, and of all humans, are so rare that they become the icons held up by a self-conscious industry to prove its value. In all the foofaraw over each season's "big news", the refurbishment of **Superman** at the moment, I suspect most readers will miss Wordsmith #3 and what it has to say about integrity.

That would be a shame, if it happens.

So let it be understood: some of us have seen what you wrote, and we count you as solidly on the side of the courageous who are committed to Art and using Art to remind us of the truth. On that side, I need not point out, reside also the angels.

With admiration and with love.

Harlan Ellison

Dear Dave and R.G.,

After reading #3 I think that Clay just might be in the wrong line of business. He's acting like a guy who is writing a "Big Important Novel", rather than like someone who is churning out a certain number of pages for a pulp house. His job is to turn in stories that people will **buy**, not to worry about writing something he thinks is "right". And see where his attitude gets him? He lost a big assignment over a measly little thing like a **name**!

Actually, despite the purposefully flippant tone of the above paragraph, I think that Clay probably **is** a "serious novelist" at heart. But then, we've all got to pay the bills somehow, don't we? And a career as a writer, never easy, is all the much less so during hard economic times. The ironic thing is that Clay realized, I think, that his stubborness about the name was "inappropriate", but he still stuck to his guns. (And I say: Good for you, Clay!)

Once again, this story brings up the conflict and consideration of art vs. craft. Here, Clay tried to treat as art something that was simply an exercise in craft. And I fear that he may be trapped where he is, because even the very title of your mag implies craft, not art. A "smith" is a craftsman first and foremost. There is some element of art in any craft, but a smith turns out work which is more functional and not so daring. An artist may make a statue out of iron, but we do not call him an ironsmith.

(And, in case it isn't clear from the above, I think that the line

between craft and art is very blurry and that craft can contain a fair amount of art. Also, I feel that you can mix "art" with "entertainment". Parenthetically, it bothers me that a certain stream of modern artistic thought seems to hold that "serious" art **must** disturb. I.e. it can not be enjoyable. Certainly some great art **is** disturbing (for instance, because it jolts us out of our usual pattern of thought) but some things are disturbing merely because they are revolting or poorly executed pieces of work. But, I digress.)

But, hey, don't hold us in suspense. Once Clay withdrew the Domino Detective, who won -- the Night Fighter or Mister Mystery?

T.M. Maple, Toronto, Ontario.

...As you saw in #4, T.M., the winner was Mister Mystery. And I think it's safe to say that Mister Mystery didn't last on the newsstands for more than a few issues.

We always appreciate your remarks on Craft versus Art because we've been criticized as putting out a book that has no conflict in it and, unlike our critics, we see much internal conflict within our hero. As you see in this issue, Clay's thoughts on his goals as a writer are becoming clear and next issue you will see a resolution that will keep him happily "smithing" for some time.

Dear Renegades,

O.K., I've been reading your book since the beginning. I call it a "book" because it's so above most of the "comics" I've read. I was worried that you'd succumb to the "adventure" element in your book to boost sales and interest. I am very glad that you haven't done it yet. That's what we have **The Spirit** and **Nemo** for.

As a big **Green Hornet** fan I noticed a similar character developing on Page 8 of the third issue. Now, I know you didn't tack on the final author's note to avoid making Clay look like a plagarist, so I was wondering if you could clarify the purpose of it...unless it's just a historical note.

Don't let the "Fever" break.

Robert Radau, Plainview, N.Y.

...I felt that the Author's Note at the end of "File it under 'P' was necessary for several reasons, Robert. The most obvious reason was to date the story within its "cultural context" -- i.e., that the Green Hornet had not been broadcast yet. But, to be bluntly honest I also felt it was necessary to have it there in case some readers did not make the Green Hornet connection.

I hope that the more imaginative readers would extrapolate on the events of the story and imagine Clay, several months later, listening to his radio and realizing that someone else had created the same type of hero. This "parallel development" has happened to most writers and it's a very bittersweet experience. Especially when the parallel idea becomes a big hit.

Dave and R.G.,

As a person who is aspiring to become a writer and (if I'm lucky) an artist, Wordsmith is fast becoming my favorite comic book title. And even if I weren't, I'd still enjoy the book since it's set in a time period I enjoy reading about, especially the pulp writer theme. As someone who is still a budding pulp collector, I enjoy reading the series a great deal and hope that this title might be able to arouse the same curiosity about the Pulps that **Steranko's History Of The Comics'** chapter (in Vol. 1) did for me in the early '70's. Count on me to write enthusiastic letters of comment to all the pulp fanzines (of which there are only a few, unfortunately) praising this book.

I won't go any further about praising your title since I think enough people will be burying you with letters that do just that. Seeing that we all have affections rooted in the pulp magazines I was wondering if you would be so kind as to let me plug some of the magazines (well, fanzines actually) that deal with the subject? I'll give their titles and prices, and a couple of quick comments on each.

ECHOES, by Tom and Ginger Johnson is the first on the list. It's available for $3.00 for a sample copy. Three issue subscriptions are $9.00 and six issue subscriptions are $18.00. This fanzine has been published since the summer of 1984 and has always suffered from a rocky frequency. Because it is only printed six times a year they have trouble keeping printers interested in it. This has resulted in size changes and the like, but now the thing is (and probably will stay) magazine size. It is rather crude in appearance; camera-ready pages are sent directly off the typewriter to the printers, and since Tom cannot afford better, he must staple all the issues himself. But, the good news is that, appearance aside, Echoes prints outstanding material from people such as Will Murray, Bob Sampson and Wooda Carr and Link Hullar - all recognized pulp authorities. Write to: Tom and Ginger Johnson at 504 E. Morris Street, Seymour, Texas 76380.

Next, **The Golden Peril**, is published by Howard Hopkins at 5 Milken Mills Road, Scarboro, Maine 04074. This is a pretty fanzine and it costs the same as Echoes at $3.00 per copy. Golden Peril is printed better than Echoes and is professionally stapled, making for a better magazine only in appearance. Otherwise, it features the same high quality of text material as Echoes. What makes this fanzine of particular interest to pulp fans is that Hopkins has a schedule that has Golden Peril appearing on **even** numbered months, while with Echoes, the Johnsons have it coming out on **odd** numbered months - thus giving pulp fandom, for the first time ever, a new fanzine **every** month.

NEMESIS, INC., published quarterly by Frank Lewandowski at 2438 S. Highland Ave., Berwyn, Ill. 60402, is the third on the list. This fanzine costs $4.00, three dollars plus $1.00 for postage. It is printed magazine size (like most pulp fanzines) and is professionally stapled. It features articles on the pulps (of course) but it also contains movie and TV reviews as well as pieces on comics and paperbacks. I recommend it for those who want to start with a good "transitory" journal rather than a "hard-core" pulp fanzine like the others I have mentioned. Nemesis also publishes reprints from old pulp magazines, usually short stories, and is very entertaining for all kinds of pulp fans.

One thing that the person unfamiliar with pulp collecting will realize is that pulp fandom is very closely knit and much friendlier than most fandoms. The annual **Pulpcon** is a really laid-back affair where everyone talks and mingles over the four day weekend event in July. The 15th annual Pulpcon will be in Dayton, Ohio this year, from July 10 to 13. You can write to PULPCON P.O. Box 112, Dayton, Ohio 45401 and enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for a reply. Rusty Hevelin and Richard Clear will send you their second progress report if you act fast. Tell them I sent you.

Dave and R.G., you might want to send complimentary copies of Wordsmith to the fanzine publishers I have listed and see if they will review your book. I'm sure they will be glad to do so.

I hope you can find space to print my lengthy letter. I'm sorry about the length, but I think your readers, who might be unfamiliar with these fanzines, might enjoy them. Then they can move on and get into the pulps (which are surprisingly cheaper than most people think).

Again, may Wordsmith, and the pulps, live long indeed!

Richard Harvey, Medford, New Jersey.

...Your letter was very welcome, Richard. But, I must add one more fanzine to your list. The Pulp Collector, published quarterly by the Pulp Collector Press. 8417 Carrollton Parkway, New Carrollton, Maryland 20784. $5.00 per issue. Subscriptions at $16.00. Although short-lived this pulpzine also ranks as one of the best. The current issue is devoted to the late Walter Gibson.

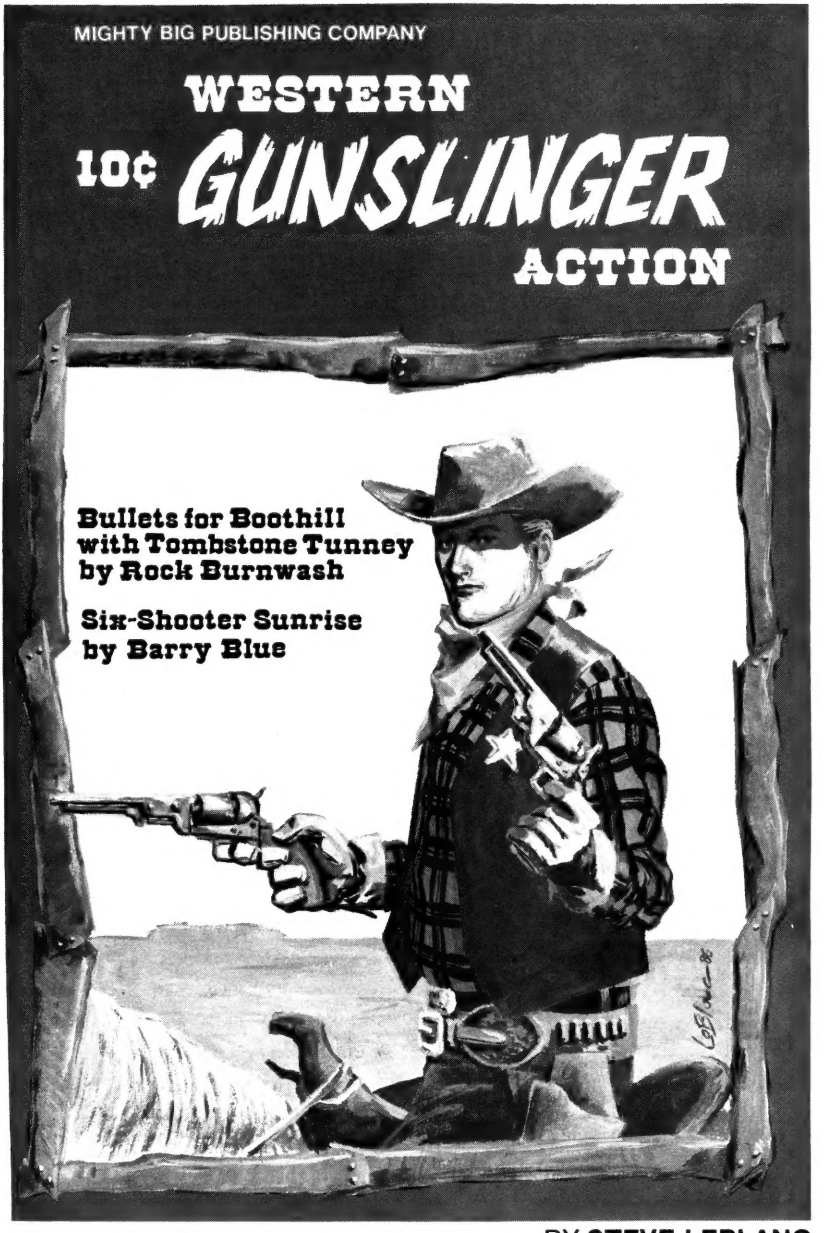
I hope, like yourself, that Wordsmith helps bridge the gap between comics and pulp fandoms -- although I realize that some people in pulp fandom would abhor this intrusion. I'm often amazed that interest in the pulps is so obscure in comics fandom. I would have thought that Jim Steranko, in his aforementioned book, proved for all time that the comics and the pulps are cousins in popular culture.

Speaking of the Pulpcon; I (Dave) will be travelling to it this year. I hope many readers will also give some thought to attending. Last year I was there to help promote Wordsmith, but at that time the first issue had not yet been printed.

NEXT ISSUE

In Wordsmith #6 (available in August) Clay and Clarissa have a real war of words. The spoken kind, not the written kind. Clay responds to her ultimatum by dropping his current pulp story to work on his serious novel. But, that's easier said than done and Clay finds that he's "Haunted By Ghosts".

PULP PIN-UP



BY **STEVE LEBLANC**

THE PULP FILE

by Don Hutchison

A Visit With A Legend

Morgan Belzak looked up into the face of his assailant, and screamed. His wide-open eyes saw white, tight-drawn skin, carmine lips and sunken cheeks. Frantically he tore at the murderous hands which encircled his throat. Madly he strove to free himself from the weight of his assailant's body. Then the hooked fingers fastened deeper in his neck; the white face descended triumphantly with gaping mouth. Cruel teeth sank into him. His lurid scream became a gurgle, and ended in silence.

from "Devils in the Dark" by Hugh B. Cave
DIME MYSTERY, February 1934

How would you like to spend the night as a guest of the man who wrote those words? I did that just recently. And lived to tell the tale.

Hugh Cave (surely the perfect name for a Gothic writer) turned out "Devils in the Dark" and dozens of other yarns like it ("Inn of the Shadow Creatures," "Horror in Wax," "The Graveless Dead") for the so-called weird menace pulps of the 1930's.

While his name is fondly remembered for these and other purple prose masterpieces, the truth is that Cave was an immensely talented professional who was able to produce **any** category of fiction with equal facility. A dependable and prolific writer, he sold over **800** pulp stories of all types. He saw his name appear in over 90 titles ranging from **Black Mask** and **Astounding Stories** to **Blue Book, Detective Fiction Weekly, Dime Detective, Top Notch, Oriental Stories, Western Trails, Weird Tales, Public Enemy, Jungle Stories** and **Magic Carpet**, among others.

Hugh B. Cave, a professional writer for nearly sixty years, is living proof that not all pulp writers disappeared when the pulps did.

I first met Hugh and his radiant wife Peggie at the 1983 Pulpcon in Dayton Ohio, where Hugh was guest of honor. By coincidence we shared a two-bedroom apartment at the university where the convention was held. The first day we managed to split bathroom, kitchen and living area without really bumping into one another. (For me, the Caves were voices in another room and for them I was the guy who flushed the toilet at 1 a.m.) On the second day we not only met but hit it off immediately. Since then we have kept up a correspondence, and this year I even managed to get down to visit them as they requested -- even if I did have to drive through a tornado to get there.

Hugh and Peg Cave live in Sebastian, a small commercial fishing village on Florida's Treasure Coast. (You might guess that a gent who wrote yarns for **Argosy** and **Adventure** would settle where gold-bearing Spanish ships were once sunk by storms and marauding pirates).

As anticipated, the visit was a pure delight. I had mailed copies of **Wordsmith** to Hugh, a warm and gentle man who is as close to a living embodiment of an older Clay Washburn as you can imagine. He told me how much he admired what Dave and Rick were doing with the magazine. I asked him if he would mind if I wrote a biographical piece on him for PULP FILE.

As I talked to Hugh Cave I recalled what Robert Bloch had said of him at the 1983 Pulpcon: "In one person incarnate we have a virtual living history of the pulps. He embodies and personifies that era, and you're not going to get a chance to meet a gentleman of his stature again."

Hugh B. (for Barnett) Cave was born in 1910 in Chester, England. He arrived in the United States when he was five and would appear to have started writing shortly after. His first published story, "Retribution," was produced for a high school short-story contest run by the Boston Globe when Hugh was a 14-year-old sophomore. While still in school he sold a South Seas story to **Brief Stories** and a jungle adventure yarn to **Action Stories**. Before he finished Boston University he was selling enough fiction to become a full-time pro.

Most of Hugh's early stories were written for the adventure magazines, his love of exotic adventure being a family inheritance. His father had been an English army officer who served in Africa, and his grandfather was Lord Mayor of Bombay and had built the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. Small Wonder that the young writer's earliest efforts bore such evocative titles as "The Shadow of Tsiang," "Bring Me His Blood," "The Green Eyes of Confucious," "The Thirty Swords," and "The Spider of Cuching." Of such dreams were the pulps fashioned.

"The pulps were a wonderful market for a young writer as well as a valuable training ground, " Cave reminisced about his early career. "Rates were low, but in how many other trades could a beginner make money while learning?"

In order to earn a living Hugh found that he had to make his typewriter smoke. Sometimes he used pen-names so that he could sell a second story to the same issue of a magazine. His alter egos included such distinguished-sounding names as Geoffrey Vace, Allen Beck, and Rupert Knowles. for the notorious "Spicy" line of magazines **(Spicy Mystery, Spicy Adventure, Spicy Detective)** he disguised his identity with that most inspired of all pseudonyms -- Justin Case.

Among other things, Cave proved that you didn't have to live in the Big Apple to be a successful pulp writer. From 1925 to 1967 his home base was Warwick Rhode Island, remote from publishers' offices. He met very few editors or fellow writers in person. Only one editor, Ken White of **Dime Detective**, became a friend, and he and Cave occasionally went on salmon fishing expeditions on the Mirimashee River in Canada. Besides White there was also Carl Jacobi.

In 1931 Cave began corresponding and exchanging criticism with this (at the time) promising young writer. It is a correspondence which has continued to the present, although the two have **never** met. As a guest of the Caves I was privileged to read copies of many of Hugh Cave's early letters to Jacobi. It is fascinating stuff, revealing a wealth of information about the life of a pulp writer in the 1930's. It is also a record of the spirit of mutual assistance exhibited by one professional to another in the highly competitive world of the Depression-era pulps.

In April of 1932 Cave wrote the still-struggling Jacobi: "Get away from the idea that I'm a fast production man or that anyone else is. H. Bedford Jones (one of the most prolific of pulp adventure writers) confesses that he does only 500,000 words a year -- or about 40,000 a month. Jones writes everything first draft and his copy is a pleasure to read. As for me I HAVE done as much as 120,000 in a single

Continued on next page

THE PULP FILE
by Don Hutchison

month; but right now I'm down to 40,000 and sometimes less. Moreover I'm at present revising a lot of stuff which was written three years ago, before I really started selling."

A more careful craftsman than many pulp scriveners, Cave maintained his prodigious output by dint of long hours. He would stack jazz and classical records on an old Orthophonic Victrola and write all day and long into the night -- often as late as two or three a.m. -- and begin again at the crack of dawn. Usually he wrote his stories first draft but would often retype them later, making minor corrections as he proceeded. In the trade he was famous for producing clean, printable copy -- a boon to word-weary editors and typesetters.

Many pulp word merchants maintained their output through the use of series characters, rewriting the same basic plot over and over again with few variations. Hugh Cave did not. In his career he wrote only two series, one about a private eye named Peter Kane for **Dime Detective,** and the Tsiang House tales for **Short Stories,** about a memorable British outpost in Borneo.

Occasionally, an editor would feed the writer a "blueprint" of a cover painting (there were no Xerox's in those days) and request a quick yarn to match the illustration. Ken White once mailed Cave a dandy blueprint for **Dime Detective.** It was a painting of hapless victims being fed on a conveyor belt into a blazing oven. Hugh not only knocked off a 10,000 word novelette to match it, but even got to title it "This Is The Way We Bake Our Dead."

Today it is generally conceded that Hugh Cave's specialty was writing for the "weird menace" pulps as exemplified by **Terror Tales, Sinister Stories** and **Dime Mystery.** There is no question that he was adept at turning out this brand of story, but a glance at a list of his published fiction indicates that he sold far more stories to the detective and adventure magazines. **Detective Fiction Weekly** alone purchased 63 of Cave's 800 published pulp yarns, and he was a familiar name in **Short Stories, Black Mask, Double Detective, Argosy,** and Street & Smith's **Western Story** magazine. (In this biography of Max Brand, "The Big Westerner," Robert Easton notes that Hugh B. Cave was one of the most popular writers in **Western Story,** along with such trail-busting specialists as William Colt MacDonald, Courtney Riley Cooper, Ernest Haycox and Brand himself. It is a measure of Cave's prolificacy that his work in the western story field is largely unacknowledged today).

"The fact is, " Cave once explained in an interview with Dr. Jeffrey Elliot, "we professional pulp writers simply couldn't afford to specialize. Rates were low and a writer who tried to stay alive by doing only one kind of story was in trouble. Look at some of the familiar names from those days and you'll see that all of them, or nearly all, wrote many different kinds of tales. And, face it, many of us were trying to move up to the slicks to such magazines as **The Post, Collier's, American, etc.**, where the better money was. To those writers, the pulps were merely a learning ground, a means to an end, and concentrating on any one kind of pulp story might be self-defeating."

Hugh Cave began to move up from the pulps as early as 1942 when he requested his agent to help him break into the glossy family magazines. His agent, Lurton Blassingame (brother of prolific pulp author Wyatt Blassingame) replied that Cave should be content to reign as "King of the pulps". He reasoned that since Cave was routinely earning a royal **three** cents a word from the pulps alone, why should he take a chance on writing an entirely different kind of story for markets where he was unknown? Cave decided to try the slicks on his own, dropping Blassingame as an agent while retaining him as a friend.

Eventually the Cave by-line appeared in over **320** issues of the top slick magazines -- a more impressive record even than that of his 800 pulp sales. He sold nearly fifty stories alone to **The Saturday Evening Post** and some 34 to **Good Housekeeping,** as well as to such other titles as **Collier's, Cosmopolitan, Esquire, Liberty, Redbook and Country Gentleman.**

Cave was stationed as a war correspondent in the Pacific during World War II, seeing at first hand Borneo, New Guinea, the Solomons, Iwo Jima and other places he had only written about in his adventure stories for the pulps and **The Saturday Eveninging Post.** Out of this period came a number of popular books, including "Long Were The Nights," "I Took The Sky Road," and "The Fightin'est Ship."

After the conflict he exercised his predilection for adventure by spending a number of years in Haiti, where he wrote "Haiti: High Road to Adventure," a book that some critics have described as the best report on voodoo in English. Later, he moved on to Jamaica where he took over an old rundown slave plantation and converted its 550 acres of mountain wilderness into a coffee plantation and pine forest. Out of his adventures in the Caribbean came the material for many of his later books and stories, including the best-selling "The Cross on the Drum," "Black Sun," "The Witching Lands," and "Run, Shadow, Run."

Many of Hugh Cave's books have gone through numerous editions and translations, and others have been adapted for radio and television. His 1959 story, "The Mission" was acknowledged as the most popular ever printed by **The Saturday Evening Post,** and an emotion-charged 1942 short-story, "Two Were Left," has been reprinted in dozens of anthologies and school text books over the years and is, in fact, never out of print.

Today, Cave's trim figure and youthful outlook refute his seventy-six years. He has returned to his first love -- fantasy -- and is busily turning out books like "The Evil," and "Shades of Evil," as well as short stories for numerous dark fantasy magazines. He maintains his youthful outlook by living in the present and working towards the future. (After all, the pulps didn't desert **him -- he** left them).

Even so, it is clear that the pulp era holds a special place in his affection.

"Ever since the Pulpcon in Dayton, I've been keenly interested in pulppaper doings and very much more aware that I played in that particular orchestra," the author said recently. "It was great fun writing for the pulps. The tales had to move. They were paid for by the word -- but if you thought you could pad a story deliberately to get a bigger check, you were in for a quick trip to the woodshed."

"The stories had to have a good clear story line, too, and characters you could care about. They were written at a time when writers of adventure stories were looking at Kipling, Stevenson and Conrad. And writers of detective fiction were using the likes of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Those who wrote western stories were turning to Zane Grey and Owen Wister, and the fantasy boys used Lord Dunsany, Ambrose Bierce and Robert W. Chambers for inspiration. Nobody -- but nobody -- consulted the writings of a Sigmund Freud. I wish to heaven the pulps were with us today."

So do we all, Hugh. So do we all.

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PULP PORTRAIT

BY RON HOBBS

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THE SHADOW